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Georgia Early Education Professionals to Present at NAEYC Conference

*Group will share insight and experience with Scholarships, Incentives
and Professional Development Registry*

ATLANTA, Ga., (June 4, 2013) – Five early childhood education officials from Georgia will share their experience in professional development with educators from around the nation Saturday at a conference of The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) being held in San Francisco, California. Georgia is one of only 14 states selected to participate in the meeting on Early Childhood Workforce Data Systems presented by NAEYC, the Center for the Study of Child Care Employment (CSCCE) and the Early Childhood Data Collaborative (ECDC).

The Professional Development Registry is one of the major components of Georgia's Professional Development System, along with SCHOLARSHIPS and INCENTIVES. The Registry tracks the education and training of more than 24,000 child care center, group and family day care home staff, providing a customized report to registrants on their education and training in order to meet state requirements or to participate in special initiatives. Georgia's SCHOLARSHIPS program offers financial support to enable many in early care and education to increase their education. It also provides career advisement to help participants explore their options for earning a credential or degree and how this impacts career advancement. In State FY12, 1,475 early care and education teachers began their pursuit of a credential with SCHOLARSHIPS support.

The INCENTIVES program rewards employment stability and educational attainment with a bonus payment upon earning a credential. In State FY12, 1,508 were rewarded with bonus payments after earning a technical college certificate, technical college diploma, associate degree, bachelor's degree or a Child Development Associate credential.

Georgia Training Approval, another major component of the system, ensures that high-quality training, offered by qualified professionals is available to continue to support the acquisition of knowledge and skills.

Georgia's delegation to the NAEYC conference includes Georgia Thomas, professional development manager for Bright from the Start: Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning; Janice Haker, director of the Georgia Head Start Collaboration Office; Dr. Benita Moore, curriculum program specialist for the Technical College System of Georgia; Kelli Young, assistant director of certification for the Georgia Professional Standards Commission; and Dr. Karen Shetterley, senior public service associate with the University of Georgia Center for Continuing Education.

"It is a great honor for Georgia to be selected for this program," said Bobby Cagle, commissioner of Bright from the Start: Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning. "The Professional Development System is helping raise the level of professionalism and improve the quality of care in early care and education in Georgia."

"Well prepared teachers in early childhood education settings are critical to a child's future school success," added Thomas. "The Georgia team will share and exchange information on the expansion of data collection, including lessons learned, with our peers from other states and US territories."

Georgia's early childhood teachers are required to participate in at least ten hours of approved training annually. Georgia Training Approval establishes the criteria for trainers and reviews training modules to ensure that they are consistent with the professional development competencies necessary to work effectively with young children.

About Bright from the Start

Bright from the Start: Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning is responsible for meeting the child care and early education needs of Georgia's children and their families. It administers the nationally recognized Georgia's Pre-K Program, licenses child care centers and home-based child care, administers Georgia's Childcare and Parent Services (CAPS) program, federal nutrition programs, and manages voluntary quality enhancement programs.

The department also houses the Head Start State Collaboration Office, distributes federal funding to enhance the quality and availability of child care, and works collaboratively with Georgia child care resource and referral agencies and organizations throughout the state to enhance early care and education. For more information, go to www.decal.ga.gov.